

Norway general statement at the International Migration Review Forum (IMRF), New York, 17.-20. May 2022

Mr President and distinguished colleagues,

Norway welcomes the opportunity this Forum provides to discuss the current opportunities and challenges for safe, orderly and regular migration.

Unfortunately, too many migrants, especially women, face marginalisation, exploitation and lack of access to decent work and other opportunities.

Too many people die or go missing while migrating along dangerous routes.

Too many migrants have been severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Norway takes part in IMRF with three main priorities:

- The first is to improve migration management and stem irregular migration.
- The second is to reduce vulnerability and attend to the needs of migrants in precarious situations.
- The third is social and economic inclusion of migrants who reside legally in Norway and elsewhere. We welcome ideas to improve the situation of regular migrants and enhance their inclusion in society and economy.

Our interpretation of GCM was expressed in the Norwegian explanation of vote in the General Assembly on 19th December 2018. We would like to underline that this interpretation also applies to the Progress Report.

The Global Compact and the Progress Report should in no way be interpreted as limiting the sovereign right of States to determine their national migration policy.

States have the authority to distinguish between regular and irregular migratory status and to reserve certain rights and welfare benefits for regular migrants.

States furthermore have the authority to decide whether welfare benefits should be paid to persons residing outside of their territory, and to regulate this in bilateral or multilateral agreements on social security.

We would also like to stress that the GCM reaffirms the obligation to protect freedom of expression. We are deeply committed to protecting people against discrimination. And we are equally committed to protecting the freedom of expression in accordance with international law.

Norway aims to secure the availability and flexibility of pathways for regular migration. But there must be a common understanding of the obligations of countries of origin and destination respectively.

The GCM clearly confirms the obligation of all states to readmit their own nationals if they have been staying illegally in other countries, whether they return voluntarily or not, and to cooperate in organising their return.

The fulfilment of this obligation remains a major challenge in the further pursuit of the visions laid out in the Global Compact.

Thank you.